

# Experiencing a Lockout?

## FREE HOUSING LEGAL ASSISTANCE

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To report a non-emergency lockout, affected tenants should call 311 and press option #7 to file a police report with the Chicago Police Department. For emergency lockouts, affected tenants should call 911.

Renters can seek free legal assistance from the Lawyers' Committee for Better Housing's Rentervention Line at [www.rentervention.com](http://www.rentervention.com) or **(312) 347-7600**. Interpreter services are available for those who prefer to communicate in a language other than English or Spanish.

Callers to the Rentervention Line should be prepared for the following:

- Leave a voicemail with your name and contact information
- A staff member will call back within one business day to ask some basic questions regarding the situation

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A "lockout" occurs when a landlord does or threatens any of the following actions:

- Change or disable the locks
- Block any entrance
- Remove doors or windows
- Shut off or interfere with utility services, like heat, electricity, gas, water or plumbing
- Remove appliances or fixtures
- Remove the tenant's personal property
- Use or threaten violence against the tenant or their property
- Any other act making the property inaccessible or uninhabitable

Lockouts are illegal under the Chicago Residential Landlord Tenant Ordinance (Municipal Code, §5-12-160).

Renters do not need a lease to be protected against lockouts, the rule applies to all residential tenancies in Chicago, even smaller, owner-occupied dwellings. Exceptions exist for some shelters and hotels.

For more information, contact the Department of Housing at (312) 744-3653 or [DOH@cityofchicago.org](mailto:DOH@cityofchicago.org).